

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 339

By Ford, O.

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Bishop W. L. Porter of Memphis.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Bishop Willie Lee Porter; and

WHEREAS, Bishop W. L. Porter was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, a longtime resident of Memphis, Bishop W. L. Porter was a highly respected member of his community, standing as the prelate of the Tennessee Central Jurisdiction of the Church of God in Christ; and

WHEREAS, one of twelve children, Willie Lee Porter came from very humble origins, becoming the head of his family after the death of his father; veering off course into gangs and drugs, he was led to the righteous path, joining the Church of God in Christ, and would go on to found his own church and rise to the rank of Bishop; and

WHEREAS, a member of the Church of God in Christ for over forty years, Bishop Porter was introduced to the Executive Leadership of the church by Bishop L. H. Ford in 1953, serving as his assistant in the department of Public Relations; and

WHEREAS, Bishop W. L. Porter assisted the interim leadership of the church in 1961, after the death of longtime leader Bishop C. H. Mason, and was a loyal servant in 1968, assisting newly elected Presiding Bishop J.O. Patterson, Sr., with the many duties of the growing church; and

WHEREAS, in 1981, W. L. Porter was appointed Jurisdictional Bishop of Central Jurisdiction of Tennessee and assigned approximately thirty churches; within seventeen years, the Jurisdiction grew to over sixty churches; and

WHEREAS, a truly inspirational leader, Bishop Porter developed an extension program that assisted pastors in Central Tennessee Jurisdiction in securing approximately two million dollars in financing for church mortgages and worked with bishops and pastors across the country to obtain loans and guarantees of more than five million dollars; and

WHEREAS, called upon again in 1989 by church leaders after the death of Bishop Patterson, Bishop Porter assisted once again in the church's administrative affairs, working tirelessly with Bishop Ford to attain an unprecedented record of new construction in the church; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Porter was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Bishop W. L. Porter leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Bishop Willie Lee Porter, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Bishop Porter.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.